The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor according to the letter, spirit, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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Write Your Senators And Congressman To Fight Anti-Labor Bills

WHOLE NO. 1890 | WILLIAM GREEN, President | WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, JULY 1, 1947 | GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer | VOL. 37, NO. 26

BULLETIN NO. 1

(This information issued by the American Federation of Labor explaining the Taft-Hartley Act, was prepared by the office of its General Counsel, Joseph A. Padway.)

Now that the Taft-Hartley Bill has become the law of the land, every labor union in the country will be faced with the tremendous task of understanding the very numerous and complex changes in the law and of adjusting their operations to these changes. In order to aid in this difficult task, the office of the General Counsel of the American Federation of Labor, will from time to time prepare and distribute bulletins and memoranda advising our affiliates of their new obligations and of the various steps they should take to protect their interests.

This first bulletin is intended to anticipate and answer the more important practical questions immediately confronting labor unions, including questions arising under those provisions of the new law which become effective when it was passed on June 23rd.

At the outset, some comment must be made respecting the application of the Taft-Hartley Act to the bargaining trades industry and other local industries. As is well known, the old Labor Board, as a matter of administrative discretion, did not apply the Act to such industries. However, that cannot be relied upon as a guarantee that the new Board will follow the same practice.

1. WHAT IS THE STATUS OF EXISTING AGREEMENTS CONTAINING CLOSED-SHOP OR OTHER UNION-SECURITY PROVISIONS?

All existing closed-shop, union-shop, maintenance-of-membership, or other union-security agreements entered into prior to June 23, 1947, are valid and enforceable for the full term of the agreement, even though that agreement has two or three or more years to run. It is important to note, however, that any such existing agreement may be renewed or extended, automatically or otherwise, at any time after August 22, 1947, thereby getting the benefit of the added year of union security. It is recommended that any provision in a longer agreement which will, after August 22, 1947, thereby presently existing agreements containing union-security clauses which will have more than a year to run be duly watched unless it is deemed more important to obtain a new agreement at the expense of union security.

2. WHAT UNIONS NEGOTIATE NEW CLOSED-SHOP OR UNION-SECURITY AGREEMENTS?

The new law on union-security agreements does not go into effect until sixty days after the enactment of the law, namely, August 22, 1947. Accordingly, until August 22 unions will retain the same freedom they have had heretofore to negotiate closed-shop or union-security agreement, but these can be made only for a period of one year.

In the case of any existing union agreement having no more than ten months to run, it is suggested that unions attempt to renegotiate or renew such agreement prior to August 22, 1947, thereby getting the benefit of the added year of union security.

3. WHAT IS THE STATUS OF CHECK-OFF PROVISIONS?

All check-off agreements executed prior to June 23 continue in full force and effect until the expiration of such agreements or until July 1, 1948, whichever date occurs first. Checking-off dues, however, is prohibited by provisions, may not be extended or renewed or negotiated after June 23, 1947. After June 23 the new regulations on check-off governing employees require individual authorizations go into effect as do all agreements executed after that date. A check-off agreement executed after June 23, 1947, may be renewed to a new agreement or an extension or renewal of an old agreement, must comply with the new law relating to check-off provisions, or else be subject to immediate injunctions without any of the protections of the Norris-LaGuardia Act.

(To be continued in later issues)

Zooming Prices Wipe Out Workers' Wartime Savings

Washington, D. C.—The workers' losing battle against last year's rising prices caused the exhaustion of a very large part of their wartime savings, according to a Federal Reserve Board study.

The board's report warned that unless the purchasing power of workers goes up, the nation's economy is headed for a slump.

Its report showed a lopsided trend during the past year. Among those in the lower and moderate income brackets, aggregate savings fell off by 10 billion dollars. Those in the upper income brackets, however, increased their savings.

What were the savings spent for? In the lower income levels, the board said, such funds were withdrawn "primarily for living expenses, medical care, recreation and other unusual expenses."

About one-fourth of the consumers who had to dip into their savings "used up all of their liquid assets" and "moved down into debt."

"It is significant," the report added, "that even within the middle and upper income groups very substantial proportions of consumers reduced their liquid assets for living expenses."

In consequence, there has been a marked drop from a year ago in the number of purchasers who expect to buy such "durable goods" as refrigerators, furniture, radios and washing machines. The report showed how automobiles alone is holding up.

A particularly heavy decline has occurred in the market for homes, because of staggering prices.

"Many consumer units, and more particularly in lower-income brackets, have disappeared from the market as prospective purchasers of homes," the report pointed out.

Some hope spots in the picture were cited. For example, there were fewer family units with incomes of less than $2,000 than a year ago, the board believed. A moderate shifting of consumers into higher income levels took place.

But offsetting this, the board said, is the fact that "price increases during 1946 reduced the effective purchasing power of their incomes and of such savings as they had."

Senate Defeats Truman's Proposal For Reorganization of Labor Dept.

Washington, D. C.—The Senate killed President Truman's plan to reorganize the Labor Department, ignoring Democratic Leader Alben W. Barkley's warning that the action would leave the Secretary of Labor little to do but collect statistics.

Mr. Truman had proposed that the United States Employment Service be placed permanently in the department, and that the Secretary of Administration be made subject to control of the Labor Secretary.

But, by a vote of 47 to 40, the Senate agreed to a motion by Labor Committee rejecting this proposal. After the first roll call, the vote was tied, 41 to 41, but Senator George W. Malone (R., Nev.) switched to defeat the plan.

As a result of the Senate action, the Labor Department remains the department of the United States Constitution, as Senator Taft-Hartley Labor Law, loses control of USES to the United States, and

Rejection of the plan also freezes the Wage-Hour Administrator's authority to issue rules and regulations under the Wage-Hour Law. The plan would have transferred administrative functions from the Fair Labor Standards Act to Secretary of Labor Lewis B. Schwellenbach.

Administration of the Wage-Hour Law presently is divided between "executive" for housekeeping purposes, but the Administrator, Harry Weaver, each, will continue to have chief responsibility for its operation.

NLRB CERTIFIES SEAFARERS

New York City—As the result of an election victory by the Seafarers International Union, AFL affiliate, over the CIO's National Maritime Union, the National Labor Relations Board certified the AFL union as bargaining agent for unlicensed personnel of the Isthmian Steamship Company.

ANOTHER NLRB RESIGNATION

Washington, D. C.—Morris P. Glushien, associate general counsel of the National Labor Relations Board, has resigned because of "serious doubts" as to the "wisdom, fairness and practicability of the new Taft-Hartley labor control law. Gerhard van Arkel, the board's general counsel, resigned last week for similar reasons.

Unions Will Violate Taft-Hartley Act To Force Constitutionality Test

Washington, D. C.—AFL Chief Counsel Joseph A. Padway announced that unions will be advised to violate two provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act which are regarded as clearly unconstitutional.

Following a conference of 75 AFL attorneys who gathered to study the Act's provisions, Mr. Padway declared the provisions, (1) banning political expenditures by unions and, (2) requiring affidavits from all union officers to the effect that they are not affiliated with the Communist party or support its principles, will be purposely violated to get the issue before the courts.

Mr. Padway said the unions not only would make known their political activities but would publish in union papers, but "they will publish special editions, as many as necessary."

He said the lawyers relied on guarantees of free speech and free press in the Constitution to pursue such a course and were confident the courts would uphold them.

The AFL lawyer said about 90 percent of those at the seminar would recommend a union refuse to bargain under the anti-Communist clause.

Asked why the lawyers took this position, Mr. Padway said:

"Because the Act intends to require them to file an affidavit of that kind."

Where the National Labor Relations Board refuses to process a case because such affidavits have not been filed, the union will test the law by asking the courts for a mandamus directing the board to act.

"A man should not have to swear that he is not a Fifth Islander, a Christian,—or anything else" to get a case before the board, Mr. Padway contended.

Moreover, he pointed out, the officer who failed to file an affidavit not only would be deprived of having his case heard but all the members of the union would be deprived.

Mr. Padway said most of the lawyers also would advise their clients to include no-strike clauses in contracts with employers.

"This clause," he said, "was generally omitted from the old closed shop. Since unions cannot discipline their members, they have nothing to gain by the obligation undertaken by a no-strike clause. In the past these clauses were conducive to peaceful relations and were much in demand by employers."

He said the requirement to give 60 days' notice of contract termination also would be disregarded.

"This is nothing but a cooling-off period which violates the principle of involuntary servitude," he said.

The lawyers conference also set tactics which will be followed in the event a general strike is called. Under the required procedures before the N.L.R.B. he said that "in practical people will know in what area to select for the general counsel [of the board] to refuse to process a case because unions have been tied, the union will test the law by

Children Exploited In Dangerous Jobs

Washington, D. C.—Shocking child labor abuses, including the employment of children in hazardous occupations, have been found in numerous violations of child labor laws were reported by the Department of Labor last week.

The Department's Division of Labor Standards issued a report declaring that many of the boys and girls illegally employed are on the farms where they are exposed to dangerous accidents.

The division cited checkups made by its field staff during the past month which unearthed some of the abuses.

"Children were found working at too young an age, for long hours, and in hazardous jobs, at night work, or under other conditions prohibited by the division's report declared.

Many of these cases of illegal employment of children are not brought to light until accidents occur, the division pointed out. It told of a typical such "mess-age tragedy" which took place in a toy factory. A 15-year-old boy suffered third degree burns when a fire broke out in the paint shop where he was employed. He had to have six blood transfusions and skin grafting.

An investigation revealed that the firm was employing 15 boys illegally after school hours and far into the night, that it "chiseled" on wages; that payroll records were doctored so as not to show their employment, and that whenever the inspector was expected at the plant the children were sent home. Criminal proceedings were launched against the company.

Similar cases are constantly occurring, the division said. It urged better enforcement of child labor laws, more adequate inspection and rigid inspection as a means of weeding out such evils.

MICROSCOPES DONATED BY U. S. LABOR AID INDIA

Philadelphia, Pa.—Microscopes contributed by the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations to the Friends Service Committee for work in India have been distributed to medical work in Bengal, where there is a great lack of medical and scientific diagnosis, Albert Mossman, Quaker worker in charge of the microscope project, reported.

During 1945 the two labor organizations donated $50,000 to the Nations@War Fund to the Quaker charge for food and medical aid. The Service Committee purchased 75 microscopes with the money.

The microscopes donated by the labor groups for food and medical aid reached to them, reading, "This instrument is a testimony of good will and friendship from organized labor in the United States, A. F. of L. and C. I. O., to be used to promote the health of the people of India."

PORTAL PAY RULED PAYABLE IN CALIFORNIA SHIPYARD

Los Angeles.—Employers must pay for time spent in preparing for work, under certain circumstances, according to a ruling of Judge Leon R. McCornick of Federal Court.

The ruling was on application of the new portal-to-portal pay act. It involved the case of Wachtler's Local 1185, AFL, against the California Shipbuilding Corporation.

The union contended that the workers were entitled to pay for time spent awaiting assignment of duties, and if they were required to don special uniforms, the time consumed became a part of the job.

The corporation argued that the recently enacted portal-to-portal pay law deprived the court of jurisdiction.

ILO Hears Report On World Labor

Geneva, Switzerland.—In his report to the International Labor Conference, Edward Phelan, Director-General of the ILO, said that it is the part of the world, "unemployment has not yet become its chief problem" that needs attention.

Citing the maintenance of high-level employment in most countries of the Western Hemisphere, he said many nations the search for full employment "have been turned into a search for manpower. European recovery must be planned from that basis," Phelan declared, if more labor were available, "not only for the expansion of labor, he said, is that of skilled industrial workers, managers, engineers and technicians.

Harry A. Watt, AFL International Representative and U. S. labor delegate, was elected vice-president of the Conference.

In a speech before the Conference he defended the democratic system of government.

"Those who today obstruct real democracy are by their very face that they sense its superiority. They dare not meet real democracy in open contest."

AFL ALUMINUM WORKERS WIN BARGAINING AGENT ELECTION

Cressona, Pa.—Employes of the Aluminum Company of America's plant here voted for the International Council of Aluminum Workers as collective bargaining agent in an election held by the National Labor Relations Board. The AFL union won out over the CIO by a large majority.

The AFL body runs the Aluminum Workers 168 votes against 86 polled by the United Steel Workers. Union Structure Workers received 24 votes while 6 votes were cast in favor of no union.

VETERAN TELEGRAPHER PASSES AWAY SUDDENLY

St. Louis.—The Order of Railroad Telegraphers lost one of its veteran members when Thomas Nason died suddenly at his home in this city, at the age of 76.

Nason had been a member of the O. R. T.'s board of directors for 20 years and served as president for 12 after the longest continuous service record of any officer of the union. He was also general secretary and treasurer of St. Louis Division 4 and on the Great Northern.

AFL MEAT CUTTERS WIN 6 CENT HOURLY INCREASE

Chicago.—Earl W. Jimerson, president of the AFL Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America, announced wage increases of 6 cents an hour for workers in the Co. and Armour & Co. About $5,000 employees benefit.

Mr. Jimerson said the increase applies to the 32 hour week in the Chicago metropolitan area rate for male workers. The agreement with the union obtained wage increases of 7½ cents an hour for female workers, giving them an average of 8.2 cents an hour in the Chicago area.

LABOR WINS IN CONGRESS!!

Washington, D. C.—Thousands of U. S. workers will benefit from a victory won in Congress to save 30-year-old ban on speed-up systems in navy yards and other naval establishments.

Several weeks ago, the House overrode its Appropriations Committee and added a "rider" to the navy's money bill forbidding the practice. This week, the Senate okayed the "rider."

Truman Signs Rent-Hike Bill As The "Lesser of Two Evils"

AFL Says Proposed Slash In Funds Will Jeopardize Housing Programs

Washington, D. C.—In testimony before the Senate Subcommittee on Housing, Bgrix Shishkin, Secretary of the AFL Housing Committee, urged restoration of cuts in appropriations for Federal housing agencies made in the House.

The AFL spokesman said, "It is our considered judgment that the failure of the House Bill to make adequate provision for the administration of housing agencies now constituted by the Federal government would, if enacted, seriously jeopardize current, efficient and economical operation of housing programs already authorized by Congress."

Charging that the proposed cuts in funds for the Federal Housing Expediting Authority are "unsupported by evidence or sound policy considerations, authorized by law, are essential to the FPHA purposes, the American Federation of Labor urges complete restoration by the Senate of the original Budget requests for the National Housing Agency and its constituents."

Mr. Shishkin declared that practically those states where rental housing is urgently needed have made no effort to protect tenants from hardship, through rent control.

Under the measure, in effect immediately, the Federal controls are extended until March 1, 1948, but decontrol is increased so that 15 percent are permitted where landlord and tenant agree. Controls extend to December 31, 1948; rent controls are retained in all federally owned and newly rented dwellings and remodeled housing. Rent control is returned to the domain of the state or locality, with provision for the Governor to move to administer the act in each rent-control area, under the Federal Housing Administrator; and present controls on nonhousing construction are lifted except for certain strategic materials.

The measure labeled the so-called "voluntary" increase of 15 percent as the beginning of the end.

"This is voluntary only so far as the landlord is concerned. Many tenants, however, will feel that there is no choice. The tenant will naturally fear that unless he enters into such a lease he will be subjected to even more exorbitant increases when rent control is ended. Whenever decontrol occurs the landlord can refuse to rent except under a lease provided for the rent increase. Many landlords will press for rent increases whether or not there is a shortage. . . .

Severe hardship will thus be imposed on many tenants. The hardship will be particularly acute in the case of persons who have invested a large portion of those meeting rental housing accommodations.

The President was perhaps bitterest on the provisions of extension of the bill which repeal almost all the rent-control features formerly provided in the Veterans' Emergency Housing Act of 1946, which would have expired until next December 31.

LABOR GUARANTIES SOUGHT IN JERSEY CONSTITUTION

Newark, N. J.—The right of labor to organize and bargain collectively would be included in the bill of rights of the new state constitution, the New Jersey Senate Judiciary Committee urged.

The proposal was included in a resolution introduced and submitted by the AFL group to delegates drafting a constitution for the state.

The labor clause as submitted by Louis E. Martinetz, president, and Vincent J. Murphy, secretary-treasurer, "necessary to any modern constitution" provides for collective and self-implementing assurance and guarantees of the right to organize and bargain collectively," the statement declared.

The AFL program calls for freedom from discrimination "of rights inherent in the concept of a fair social order" and provision for industrial housing and aid to private housing by "appropriate governmental agencies" and opposes any "equal rights" amendment which would be a deadly enemy to industry.

ILGWU PLANS LABOR COLLEGE

Plans for the establishment of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union labor college were made in instructing the union's executive board to take steps toward establishment of a labor college to train young workers.

The resolution expressed the hope that the college would be ready in the fall, but it emphasized that the project would be undertaken even if the ILGWU had to act alone.

Federal Mine Control Ends; Next Step Stumps Experts

Washington, D. C.—Operation of the nation's coal mines faced an uncertain future after the Interior Department relinquished control of the U. S. Government after more than a year of Federal operation.

Failure of the private operators to agree on a new contract with the United Mine Workers Union made immediate resumption unlikely when the miners' ten-day vacation ends on July 8. The contract with the Government operators will have been in operation for June 30.

In the meanwhile, Secretary of Labor Schwellenbach indicated he would call a conference between coal operators and representatives of the UMW.

Two large captive mine corporations—U. S. Steel and Pittsburgh Consolidated Coal Co.—were reported in the press to have made an offer of a substantial wage increase to the miners.

The Government, it appeared, would not step into the picture again—not immediately, at least—with an injunction suit under the new Taft-Hartley Act. Strong differences of opinion developed as to whether the new law applied in the coal case because of the absence of a contract.

Federal legal authorities were understood to believe that the expiration of the contract between the Government and the union leaves a gap which is impossible to bridge legally since the miners now have no employer. How to compel a half-million miners to work for private owners with whom they have no contractual relations or any other form of agreement on wages and working conditions is the point stumping the Government experts.

AFL Supports Health Insurance Bill; Hits Poor Conditions In Mine State

Washington, D. C.—In testimony before a Senate committee, representatives of the American Federation of Labor urged the enactment of the Wagner-Murray-Dingell National Health Bill, sponsored by Senators Wagner of New York and Murray of Montana.

The AFL spokesmen were Edward H. Weyler, Secretary-Treasurer of the Kentucky Federation; William A. Calvin, Vice-President of the Hakeny Coal Conferences; Workers Union, who spoke for the New York Federation; and Joseph D. Keenan, representing the New Jersey Federation of Labor.

While praising the liberal plan introduced by Senators Wagner and Murray, the AFL spokesmen urged another pending health measure sponsored by Senator Taft, the Ohio Bill, they declared, is based upon the principle that workers must be forced individual to undergo a means test before he can receive prior to receiving any benefits. In supplying only those who are unable to pay, he in need, the Taft Bill ignores the principle of insurance against illness by improving the health of all, the AFL spokesmen declared.

In support of the Wagner-Murray Bill, the AFL spokesmen urged the almost universal coverage which it provides with payroll deductions. Mr. Calvin of New York said, "This would end financial catastrophe in sickness. Illness of any portion of a family or community drags down the remainder of the group to the level of the afflicted. A nation cannot afford to be half sick and half well. . . . The cost of preventable ill-health and illness of their dependents cannot be fully efficient workers for production."

As a backdrop for his own remarks, Mr. Weyler displayed photographic documents from local union officials exposing the deplorable living and medical conditions found in the Kentucky coal fields. Among the pictures shown these men were bitterly critical of the inadequate sanitary facilities under which the miners must rely for their physical well being. Under these plans there is no freedom of choice in selecting a doctor, they said a situation which would be corrected by the Wagner-Murray measure.

Charges that doctors and nurses in the area are under complete control of the coal operators and the county medical association, the statements declared instances of this are easily available.

Mr. Lee Vales, UMW District 19 president, wrote, "The other day a man came to my office with a broken pick stuck through his foot. He had to get some one to operate on it, the doctor, not his own doctor, but one selected by the coal company. This man's foot was so swollen before it could be taken out that any type of medical care a man deserves is suffering some 30 years in the coal mine?"

AFL LABOR LEAGUE SENDS FOOD TO GERMAN UNIONISTS

New York City—Paul C. French, executive director of CARE, announced completion of delivery of 500 food packages, donated by the Labor League for Human Rights, to German trade unionists and their families.

The League, headed by AFL Vice-President Matthew Woll, originally purchased 2,000 CARE food packages for union members in Austria as well as 200 food- and 200 blanket packages for distribution in Norway to widows of men killed fighting in the resistance movement during the Nazi occupation.

Distribution of the packages in Germany was conducted by the Arbeiter Wohlfahrt, an organization composed of representatives of leading German trade unions.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION TO BE INCREASED IN ILLINOIS

Springfield, Ill.—Awards under the workmen's compensation act for occupational diseases act will be increased to a maximum of $7,500 in accidental death by representatives of labor and management agreed.

Mr. Reuben G. Soderstrom, president of the Illinois Federation of Labor, said the program will increase benefits from $5,000 to $7,500 for $4,500 to $7,200 and will make similar increases for compensation in cases of injury or illness contracted in the course of employment.

"Agreed" bills to amend the two acts were introduced in the state legislature and will be unopposed.

Mr. Soderstrom declared that Wisconsin, Ohio and New York are the only other states comparing with Illinois in the amount of awards paid for industrial accidents.

Note to Editors

Because of the July 4 holiday, the supplement of the AFL Weekly News Service this week will be omitted.

The next regular edition of the news service will be sent to you on July 8.